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THE GREAT RESOLVE

An Essay on the European War
and the
Possible Settlements Thereof

D. P. RHODES

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AN ESSAY ON THE EUROPEAN WAR
AND THE
POSSIBLE SETTLEMENTS THEREOF

IN TWO PARTS

PATRIOTISM AND DEVOLUTION
THE SOLUTION

By
D. P. RHODES

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THE GREAT RESOLVE

Patriotism and Devolution

BEHOLD, in Europe, a great wave of patriotism in mid career. There are, at the same time, other phenomena, some correlative, some incongruous, — as, for example, a clash of industries and political ideals, a nation believing itself stifled and struggling for air, a religious revival with priests and warriors, shoulder to shoulder, bearing icons; there are also sluggards, skulkers and unwilling soldiers, a pistol nosing them in the back. But over and around these more or less familiar landmarks of an embattled plain presses a weighty flood whose final source, a long way back, lay in untilled valleys affording livelihood to the erect, if simple, denizens thereof — hence to be defended by them unitedly against all comers, until such time as growing numbers should compel excursions down into the unknown.

Opinions differ as to the relative significance

of this feature of the European war. By some it is merely taken for granted as an invariable concomitant of international disputes which no longer figures conspicuously amongst the final causes of such disputes, whilst others urge that, in the present conflict, love of country and pride of race are factors so predominant as to render all else of little weight. But there is no disagreement whatever as to the persistent reappearance of these factors in national quarrels; for everybody knows that, if there were no patriots, war would be impossible. Either the leader, or the few who hire him, or the many who are led must be patriots; otherwise there can be no fighting; adjustment of differences carried even unto the amalgamation of two races must take place before any question of hostility may arise.

Such being the case, it must always have been our duty to put patriotism to the same tests to which we are accustomed to put religions, philosophies and political systems: the test of reason, the test of sentiment. Have we performed this duty? Evidently not; it is, moreover, a ticklish and ungrateful business.

Yet if there was ever a favourable season for the disintegration of prejudice, the present mo-

ment, for this purpose, seems fairly teeming with promise. When one half of mankind is engaged in a struggle any settlement of which in accordance with accepted ideas will certainly imply the most sinister possibilities for both the belligerent and the other half, it becomes not only permissible but even obligatory to undertake an examination, as rigorous as possible, of that quality in mankind without which no such struggle could ever be set afoot. Especially is this a time when all rhetoric should be suspect. If the tyranny of catchwords and high-sounding phrases to which we are always more or less subject seems now in a fair way to prove more oppressive than ever, a sincere and deliberate effort should be made to secure some measure of relief. And if, in the process, much that we have been accustomed to regard as sacred turns out to be so only verbally and not solidly founded in sentiment or in reason, a further and prodigious effort should be made — how prodigious, to be successful, we already know too well — to bring the embarrassing and false formulas into general discredit.

The spirit of the clan; tribal jealousies; civic pride; national pride; racial pride:—

these are the cherished prepossessions that should now be subjected to a most candid scrutiny. They verge so obviously upon one another that, for the purposes of this essay, they may be grouped under the head, patriotism, except where otherwise stated. The element, nearly always present in patriotism, which is derived from climatic and topographical conditions will not be here considered, since it has no immediate bearing on the present inquiry or its results.

Amongst the vexatious questions here to be asked are the following:—

Is pugnacity now, and must it ever remain, an essential part of man's composition; if so, is it not merely inevitable but even desirable that his passion be used for upholding an ideal that is to some extent altruistic rather than be vented in paltry quarrels?

Have patriots ever rested content with half-successes? If so, may they continue indefinitely to be thus satisfied?

Has any nation ever had so admirable a record as to be justified *ipso facto* in making considerable sacrifices to the end of keeping itself in the forefront of civilisation?

Do we really emulate our famous dead?

How is our competence to deal with difficult social and economic questions affected by the preoccupations of nationality?

And the best way to answer the above and many correlative questions will be to answer the two following: —

What modifications, if any, of patriotism as a motive force may be expected in the future, near or remote?

What modifications of patriotism, if any, are clearly desirable in the immediate future, and especially in connection with the settlement of the European war?

DESTINY OF PATRIOTISM

We may begin by postulating man's interest in his posterity, — not that this is either a truth of the highest certainty or indispensable for the purposes of this inquiry, but that it seems a reasonably safe starting-point and will serve to abridge some of our preliminary steps. Man, to be sure, is by no means conspicuous amongst animals in his solicitude for generations unborn. Even as a provider for his offspring, he suffers by comparison with many of the lower animals which seem to devote nearly their whole energy and an incredible ingenuity to the

protection of their young. Nevertheless the public works that he undertakes, both of a material and of an intellectual character, would be incomprehensible if he had no care beyond the egoism of his grandchildren. Consciously or no, he must somehow be concerned for their altruism as well; i. e., for their concern for their grandchildren, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Also the childless have counted amongst the most thoughtful providers for the distant future; and it would be difficult to maintain that the most depraved specimens of the race were ever quite successful in resisting the claims of posterity.

Keeping this in mind, we may pass on to the central theme of the discussion and note that patriotism is to no one a mere emotional luxury without practical implications. Looking forward or looking backward, it looks always toward achievement, or toward an effort at achievement, no matter how hopeless the effort may appear. We should, then, consider in what ways patriotic endeavour may eventuate in the life of a single patriot or of a community of patriots and of their posterity. First, the efficient or fortunate patriot.

THE FORTUNATE PATRIOT

Every true patriot wishes to see his fatherland in the van of civilisation. He applauds and seconds all efforts of his countrymen made in the direction of better thought, better art, better government, better living, greater wealth. If jealous neighbours interfere, he fights for his country with all the determination that in him lies. Finally if, through peaceful or warlike measures or both, his hopes are realised and he sees his fatherland indeed and admittedly pre-eminent amongst nations, may he rest content with this achievement? If he may, his patriotism will be satisfied and will cease to be for him a moving force. But the other nations, by their very existence, will remain a menace to the supremacy of his own. They, too, must be supposed to contain patriots, — possibly efficient ones. Hence our original patriot, or society of patriots, to achieve final success, must either contrive the conquest of these other nations or, by voluntarily sharing with them the secrets of national progress, proceed to break down the barriers between nation and nation, race and race, community and community, until one kind and one degree of civili-

sation shall become the common property of mankind. In either event, patriotism, — the original motive force, — will dwindle and disappear. In other words, the highest aims of patriotism are suicidal.

THE UNHAPPY PATRIOT

But such a state of affairs, or anything nearly approaching it, has never been realised upon Earth. Men have dreamed it, but it has not come to pass. Evidently, the most aspiring patriots have been cheated of their goal, either by other patriots who were in turn foredoomed to failure, or by some other opposition with which patriotism had nothing to do. What, then, of these unhappy patriots and their posterity? Sometimes we have seen their aspirations rudely and completely checked and themselves become traitors not only to their own country but to all mankind. Again we have seen disappointments and set-backs followed by redoubled efforts and real achievement. We have seen men described as successful patriots, these being of two classes: men who have died while in the process of patriotic achievement, and others who have seemed to get everything they desired in life by using patriotism as a

means. In these last, the patriotic impulse is obviously not unmixed, and in both is it left unsatisfied because of the menace from without to which their unfinished fabric has always been exposed.

THE CRUCIAL QUESTION

Hence the question arises, Are civic pride, national pride, pride of race, pride of clan, — all those forms of *esprit de corps* which, for convenience, we have classed under the head, patriotism, — are these destined to a ceaseless ebb and flow, partial suppression, partial re-crudescence, local triumph and local defeat, as long as the race shall endure? Shall they never become obsolete either through an absolute vindication of their virtue or through a final demonstration of their futility?

There can be no doubt that in the acts and utterances of the vast majority of mankind is implied an affirmative answer to this question, as — Yes, patriotic emotion will continue throughout the ages to have pretty much the same influence on human thought and conduct as it has had in the past; it is unlikely that men will ever cease to take pride in banding together and working for the common weal, and

it is equally unlikely that one man or company of men will ever conquer the earth and consolidate that conquest in such wise as to render patriotism superfluous.

That anyone returning such an answer should ever himself be capable of a patriotic act would seem strange but for the fact that nearly all patriots are to be found in the earliest and least ambitious stages of achievement. If they are, for example, earnestly advocating improvements in the schools of their own town or diplomatically securing an advantage for their country's trade, it is not inevitable that they should look beyond the immediate results of the business in hand; — taking care of the pennies should mean that the pounds will take care of themselves. To but few has it been vouchsafed to consider of a world-dominion; and in these the patriotic impulse has generally become so embroiled with other motives as to suggest the probability that it was about to disappear well before its final vindication could be expected. We must ask, then, — Is the common-sense view of the future justifiable; is it possible that patriotism will never be eliminated from human concerns either by a perfect realisation of its virtue or by a final demonstration of its futil-

ity, but will go on repeating its half-successes and half-failures to the end of time?

And the answer must be that this is indeed possible, but only on one condition: to wit, that the theory of devolution be also justified by the event. If the human race has already reached, or is soon to reach, its highest point in the scale of culture and is thenceforward to degenerate in mind or body, to lose gradually the faculties of logic and criticism or the energy to make the decisions thereof effective, to lose even the power to keep records, and to become finally an insane or lethargic rabble, shorn of all striking significance in the scheme of nature, this devolutionary process may indeed be accompanied by those same manifestations of clan-spirit which we have witnessed in its career to date and in the careers of many animals. Even upon this supposition, it might be possible to forecast the eventual disappearance of clan-spirit, but we need not here consider a contingency so remote and so barren of any but a purely logical importance. The point which is practically important to be established is that, upon any theory of our future other than the devolutionary, it is inconceivable that patriotism should endure. If, on the whole, we mark time (though

this be but a manner of speaking) or if we indefinitely improve our standard of culture in those directions which are often so easily discernible and always so difficult for a unit of our unwieldy bulk to follow, we shall in time become incapable of responding to the call of country, of glorifying the traditions of a race, of defending the rights of a clan, or of asserting the superiority of a caste.

OUR COMMON HERITAGE

In order to admit this necessity we have but to recognise that prime condition of our every effort, — that single essential principle of our very existence, — which binds the white man to the black, the ignoramus to the scholar; nay more, which governs every man's brain and his belly in equal degree, links them both to his dog's, and, for that matter, levels the whole of stalking creation with the dust that is under its feet. Abhorrence of monotony is the universal rule, — the only one we know.

In an earlier work,* the present writer has endeavoured to show that the available data of Nature point unmistakably to a single element in a single dimension as constituting the uni-

* *The Philosophy of Change*; Macmillan, 1909.

verse in which we live and of which we form a part; and, in the course of this work, the single constituent element is considered at length in its hypothetical, continuous flux from one pattern to another. No definite goal is in view; yet, from this flux, atoms and molecules of matter seem inevitably to be evolved, attracting one another in accordance with the law of gravitation and creating tri-dimensional illusions for the benefit of any suitably organised, sentient beings that may later appear in their midst. The so-called ether waves, as well, are seen to be inevitable, their known velocity affording a key, as yet unused, to the single dimension of the hypothetical universe. Similarly, matter and its peculiar attributes must eventually be resolved into the simple element, although that condition of the resolution which we call Time may not, perhaps, be regarded in the same way as in any consideration of a known evolution. Matter will be resolved into the simple element when all the reciprocal relations of its particles are exhausted, each relation having been realised once and no more. In the interval, matter exists as an appearance or illusion to which sentient, material beings like ourselves may respond while remaining insensible to the flux of

its constituent. And in this interval is produced our own world and perhaps many others that have preceded its birth or will follow after its collapse.

If this theory be accepted, the abundance and variety of Nature and the mysteries of thought remain still inscrutable; for it is evident that the manifold details of our world may not be derived from, nor explained by, the consideration of any universe, apparent or hypothetical. And indeed, in accordance with the self-same theory, it is inconceivable that these riddles should be finally solved and any bit of reality positively perceived until all the illusions of the one-dimensional universe have been exploited. Yet an attentive survey of this hypothetical universe — which universe, be it repeated, not only seems to be pointedly suggested by the results of modern chemical and astronomical research but may be shown to justify its assumption up to the point of the evolution of geometrical concepts and of matter with all its peculiar attributes — serves to render all human problems less vexatious in character, less prolific of futile and baneful speculation. For, in the universe of one dimension, the known data of Nature are at once perceived to be illusory yet possessed

of a negative significance, whilst the search for truth appears consistently as a destructive process up to the final step. Hence, all else being equal, the more finished your syllogism and the more solid its premises, the sooner will it be discarded. Tradition is hereby shorn of its meretricious display; Indolence, representing evil to be good in order to let well alone, suffers a loss of countenance; and the general duty to prune our civilisation of its withered boughs in favour of the younger shoots becomes more obvious than ever. Any familiar human institution may then be maintained for an indefinite period but may not be invested with sanctity nor regarded as either indestructible or indispensable for the welfare of the race. When the burthen of it comes to be sorely felt, the question of relief may be taken up without serious misgivings or acute regret.

A comprehensive summary of the philosophy of change may not be included within the limits of this essay. In connection, however, with our discussion of patriotism and its destiny, it is desirable to notice the bearing of this principle of continuity on certain of the normal pursuits of man. Let us proceed, then, to a brief consideration of our common heritage.

A man may make speeches or play tennis or eat a quail every day for a considerable period, since the conditions of each performance differ so widely from those of the preceding ones as to leave him no doubt that his act is much more a new one than the repetition of an old. If the speechmaker is notorious amongst us for “repeating himself,” as we say, none knows better than he that our estimate of him is but a manner of speaking; if he were really in danger of repeating himself, his terror would be extreme, and no power could draw a word from his lips. With the assiduous tennis-player, it is the prospect of a change in bodily condition, or of new strokes executed or witnessed, or of a novel score and contest, or of an improved standing amongst his rivals, that brings him daily into court. The peculiar meat and flavour of a quail may afford the highest possible relish for a week of dining. And in dining or tennis-playing or speechmaking, or in any other of our activities, — whether bodily or intellectual, and no matter how habitual, — we run no real risk of repetition. In this continuous universe in which we live — unless all appearances are not merely deceptive but even nugatory — it is certain that no act of man’s, no process of Nature’s, may be

repeated. Nevertheless, in our obscurity, we take account of seeming similarities, seeming repetitions. At the outset, they may lie attractively in the path of least resistance; but, as they accumulate, they become wearisome, then disgusting, then fraught with menace. It is as if Chaos itself were stealing upon us like a deadly gas. We must retreat, if we may, shunning Stability as that limit on the hither side of which we have our being. If we are merely speechmakers or tennis-players or diners off the fat of the land, escape should be easy; if we are prisoners in a cell or victims of inquisitorial torture, madness or death may be the only refuge. And generally, in every-day life, a time comes to the most bibulous when he may perhaps do other things but may not drink; to the most studious when he may do nearly anything but read; to the scribe when his pen seems as a giant oak; to the poet when all the world is wrapped in fog; to the philosopher when he excels in platitudes.

Patriotic endeavour is probably never as engrossing a pursuit as any of the above may be; moreover, it is generally interwoven with a host of other pursuits. On the other hand, it is seldom of so passionate or vicious a character

as to escape, for long at a time, the searching glance of reason; and furthermore, as we have seen, it is forever thwarting its own aims and suffering a self-inflicted defeat. This persistent failure to improve its standing amongst the rival concerns of life does but invite the approach of that dreaded cloud of similarities and repetitions which are always threatening human unreadiness. Suppose an ardent patriot and otherwise average man to live forever, remembering his own experience of a century as easily as we remember ours of a twelvemonth; no amount of interweaving of his patriotic career with other pursuits could avert the arrival of a day whenceforward it would be impossible for him to take the least interest in the welfare of a nation or the rights of a clan. Howsoever needy or perilous his situation in life, he would be incapable of any effort toward claiming the protection of either nation or clan; or if he should indeed manage to utter the appropriate words to this end, they would at once be recognised as a hollow sham. Even so will become the race of us. How far an hereditary aptitude for ideas may accelerate the process, is a question that need not concern us here, for no such factor is required in the final result. History

alone, uncertain though her vision, may make the implements with which all national barriers will be swept from the face of practical affairs.

Certain other barriers will disappear at the same time; but, inasmuch as the world's most urgent business of the moment is with the idea of nationality, we shall do well to begin by admitting that the bombast of Trafalgar Day and the Fourth of July exalts that which is doomed. Patriotism, as an emotion, as a career, as a political device, is doomed to desuetude, even as feudalism, slavery and political religions; — doomed, that is, unless the race itself is doomed to devolution. Which perhaps the race is; but which the race will never admit. If tomorrow a biologist should discover that we had but one chance in a thousand of escaping a long, continuous and eventually fatal decline in bodily and mental efficiency, we might all become professed devolutionists in theory; but, in the practical affairs of life, we should doubtless take no account of the new doctrine, or, if we did, our decline would be rapid enough to startle and exasperate the biologist.

FOUNDATIONS OF PATRIOTISM

We have now to consider another aspect of patriotism, — to ask, What is its origin?

Let us begin by admitting that the future is the unique concern of us all. When we enter upon a study of history or go forth to view an admirable monument of the past, our incentive is either the intrinsic pleasure hoped for in the experience or the advantage to be gained therefrom for ourselves or others; it is never, in tolerably sane persons, the possibility of becoming actually embedded in the past. Only in its bearing on the future is the past of any interest. Moreover, the future, in its general outlines or as between certain alternatives, is always susceptible of forecast, whilst the past, which may be neither lived over again nor derived from experiential elements in our actual possession, — since Nature does not proceed backward, — is largely a subject of surmise, and no two persons may hold quite the same views concerning it. History gathers up the threads of human action and hands them to each new generation who, looking backward, find them already worn filmy and inextricable. Though Cæsar crossing the Rubicon be justifiably regarded as a fact, it is a fact absolutely devoid of meaning except in connection with a vast number of other facts each of which, when similarly considered, must forever remain

matter of conjecture. Logic here is of slight competence; opinion and sentiment must be given free play.

In the argument, just completed, on the destiny of patriotism, opinion and sentiment have figured not at all; the subject lay within the domain of logic. On the other hand, a discussion of the foundations of patriotism may not be conducted in the same rigorous manner; no more is it an indispensable forerunner of the appeal which will be made in the second part of this essay. Nevertheless, since a tolerably plausible exposition of this subject might have some bearing — not on the ulterior destiny of patriotism, but — on the immediately proximate status of patriotism as a motive force, it should be stated, as briefly as possible and in well-worn words, that the origin of patriotism, in so far as climate and natural surroundings are not involved, would seem mainly to be found in the two following conditions of our early existence as a race: —

(1) The necessity of primitive men to band together for self-protection in the usual occupations of the time, and the contingent obligation to construct an ethical ideal which should justify a resort to aggressive combat; and

(2) That inherent discontent — mainspring of our existence — which, while driving the most active individuals forward to improve their condition in life, caused their less enterprising and more reflective brethren to magnify the deeds of their ancestors.

Thus self-interest and religion combined to establish a kind of cult of the tribe to which even its most powerful and ambitious members might seldom prove unfaithful, — a crude system, no doubt, and one more suited to savages than to a race of intellects busy with all manner of useful devices. Yet this ingenious race is likewise of a tremendous inertia; and today we see the tribal system still in full swing in the form of huge nations and alliances of nations engaged admittedly in mortal combat.

As to Condition 1, — it seems impossible to discover that the spirit of the clan has afforded any but a fleeting and precarious security to the individual in his pursuit of happiness. Imperfect though it be, this safeguard has doubtless been indispensable through ages upon ages; just as certainly may it be discarded at any moment when its true character and implications have become clear to a considerable number of persons possessing influence in our af-

fairs. And it is precisely this revelation that may not unreasonably be hoped for as a consequence of the present European war. To no practical purpose whatever have political philosophers, contemplating the superficialities of events, deigned to argue that nations, though incapable of rising to those heights of virtue which are accessible to individuals, are always saved from descent into those depths of iniquity which are familiar to countless units in every generation. In point of consequences, material or moral, though nations be indeed incapable of rising even to the height of common justice, they are forever demonstrating that, in the slightest lapse from their accustomed plane of morality or even in preserving the most perfect traditional uprightness, they may cause more misery and whet vicious appetites more effectually than any conceivable society of loose-lived individuals could ever manage to do. More of this later on.

Meanwhile, as to Condition 2, — present discontent suggesting a reverence for ancestors, — there seems no way of escape from a similar conviction. To read the words and deeds of our famous dead is not merely obligatory but even entertaining and often either thrilling or sur-

prisingly suggestive. Yet our chief concern, in this occupation, is to profit by the errors of the most admirable amongst them; every effort to derive a paragon for our own day ends in failure. Vaguely as we know our forefathers, we could not admit them to our society; no more, upon consideration, could we wish it were possible to introduce ourselves in their midst. Any of us who should suddenly find ourselves amongst the sturdy Puritans of early New England should be not only hideously uncomfortable but severely disapproving, as well; and, to climb still higher in the family tree, we might prefer to remain uninvited to our rich uncle's board rather than dodge the post-prandial bones. Edward with the garter would probably appear too heavily humourous; we should dislike to roll Kalkstein in a carpet even at the Great Elector's behest, knowing that his head was to come off at the end of the journey; nor can we imagine ourselves clutching at political liberty with the gesture of ninety-three. Nobody of today would dare write one of Shakespeare's plays if Shakespeare had not already written it himself, nor to speak of Nature as Newton did. "Each man to his time," it has been said; "if we can do as well for our time

as these have done for theirs, we may still carry the banner of civilisation in the vanguard of the nations." Yet the most moderate of such patriotic dicta would probably lose their force for any who might assist, even as passive spectators, at the events of a bygone age.

On the other hand, our illustrious ancestors — if, by a similar miracle, they might have surveyed the world that was later to be ours of today — would doubtless have looked on us with a similar displeasure and disapprobation. Being ignorant of the intervening steps in the process of evolution, they must take the final product as they found it and compare us with themselves. Their censure would, of course, have been various and we may not guess very many of the counts in the total indictment. Nevertheless, it seems a safe conjecture that certain of our forefathers of recent generations in the Western world would have seen in us a race of weedy, neurotic, inventive busybodies dependent, for our very existence, on manifold combinations of clangorous and evil-smelling machinery, and committed to the most fruitlessly intricate devices in our social and political life. These would have welcomed the sight of the rare individuals amongst us in whom

were preserved the robustness of physique and simplicity of aim so common in their own day. Other of our forefathers, though not contemptuous of our physique, would probably have marvelled at the meagreness of our spiritual life; still others would have been struck by our timidity in reasoning with ourselves or with one another and our naïve reliance on unchallenged syllogisms. All, probably, on witnessing the battles now being fought in Europe, would at once have suspected that this could not have been a people's war in its origin inasmuch as a struggle of such proportions, if precipitated by a generation so peaceably materialistic, would have amounted to a gigantic and unthinkable affectation.

Similarly, we of today — could the life of a distant generation of the future be suddenly discovered to us, as in a theatre — should doubtless find repellent traits in our posterity. But we may always hope that such traits would be few and, from generation to generation, more satisfactorily explicable; for the measure of progress, on the one hand, or of decadence, on the other, can never be a comparison with the past, since the past may not be altered, resuscitated, or adequately comprehended. The

measure of progress or of decadence in any day, year, century, or millennium, is the ratio between the sum of those things which are urgently and obviously demanding to be done at the *beginning* of such day, year, century, or millennium, and the portion of those same things which are forthwith set in process of being done and continued in that process throughout each remaining portion of the period in question.

When scientists and historians are both prepared and permitted to teach the growing mind that we cannot be reasonably certain of the significance of any event in the past — when, consequently, the study of the future may be taken up in a methodical manner — it will be unnecessary either to exalt or to disparage the striking figures in history and, incidentally, a great deal of unprofitable recrimination may be dispensed with. The methodical study of the future, to be sure, is confined to negative propositions from which only the most general positive inferences may be drawn; but its conclusions possess the advantage of certainty which is denied to our concrete considerations of the past. Let us briefly notice the limitations of our study of both past and future, as applied to the case of patriotism.

If you try to batter to pieces any idol boasting the respectable antiquity of Patriotism, you are at once asked, even by the most friendly onlookers, what you propose to set up in its place. You may smile as much as you like at the audacity with which, by implication, you are being credited; it remains a serious matter nevertheless. For our history lessons have utterly failed to dispel the illusion that every proper iconoclast should have a program of reconstruction in his pocket, — one, too, that will really work. It is apparently to no purpose that we have seen the precepts and prophecies of all political and religious reformers of both ancient and modern times perverted and falsified from the very date of their utterance. And perhaps, indeed, this lesson will itself be falsified, since the lessons of history are dubious at the best. Some day, perhaps, an iconoclast will actually reconstruct.

But the case here in question lies partly within the domain of logic. Premising the limits of the best human knowledge, we should readily admit that the more specific is any construction of the future, the less exact will be the forecast; that only in its most general aspects may the future be forecast with any approach

to absolute certainty. Which should mean that he who pulls down is very unlikely to build up, or that, if he has indeed a hand in the upbuilding, this process will be of a different character from any he may have had in mind. Intelligent destruction is as much as may be reasonably expected of any reformer.

Just how the daily life and yearly reckonings of the race would be affected by a rapid and considerable weakening of the clan-spirit may not be described. Only general statements are possible. The spirit of the clan will eventually give place to a more rational egoism or — what comes to the same thing — to a more scientific and comprehensive altruism.

Meanwhile, be it observed, idol-smashing is a big word to be applied to any project undertaken against so venerable an institution as patriotism; idols of this kind are seldom to be disposed of by a single impetuous assault. At any moment, to be sure, they may fall of their own weight or faulty construction; or, on the other hand, they may crumble almost imperceptibly. Whichever may be the case of patriotism, the actual spectacle will perhaps be full of bitterness and sorrowful beyond words. It may

be accompanied by the most odious by-play; greed and all manner of unworthy pretences may figure among the disintegrating elements; much of the earth's nobility and simplicity of soul may perish in the ruins. For it is everywhere understood that "Long live the King!" has been shouted with a generous fervour that has removed all rancour from the heart, left no slightest stain in the memory and afforded a blessed comfort to the dying and the bereaved. Besides, can we of today pretend that we should like to see Frenchmen cease to be Frenchmen, or Englishmen being split up into groups by a central-universal committee on ethnology? However deep and real our present grievance, — however urgent and inexorable, — it may not be denied that the love of country has inspired splendid achievements; verily, he who purposes taking a hack at our good old idol shall not do it with a light heart.

But is it easy today to win to light-heartedness on any terms? Some few at the battle-front — some few, stocking their granaries very far from the same front — may achieve, or successfully counterfeit, this miracle. To any who are leading a tolerably normal life, learning what they may of the conditions of the great

conflict, and keeping a decent faith in their power of independent judgment, it should be clear that we are all confronting a crucial problem, the solution of which, according to any tried method, means inevitably an age of darkness to follow. The saying that democracy is at stake is a ridiculously inadequate statement of the crisis. For the world might worry along pretty comfortably without democracy, but it cannot manage at all if the preposterous fashion of stabbing in the back is to be sustained. Radical measures are necessary, the like of which have not been seen before. Neighbour, if you've no less than the ordinary ambition to provide a decent heritage for your children and your children's children, it is most emphatically your business, now and henceforward, to look into your heart and cudgel your brains till you discover the means to this end that are rational, — the means that have a chance of success. If, in the process, certain of your ideals become liable to discredit, it is still your business to ask yourself honestly how best you may help to bring good out of that which seems but a choice of evils. If you fail, no shift will serve when retribution is here and hammering on your door.

The Solution

WHY should patriotism, for the purposes of this essay, have been singled out from all human concerns to be consigned so logically to perdition? Supposing we manage to elevate our standard of culture or to maintain it, as we say, upon its actual plane, not patriotism alone but any other of our present concerns, as well, may be eliminated from the future by precisely the same process. In accordance with the cardinal principle of our existence — which is likewise the single principle of all Nature, and which has here been defined as the abhorrence of similarities and repetitions — that which *is* must *go*, from the greed of gold to the fashion in hats. Why, then, patriotism to the fore?

Because, on the one hand, it is amongst the most transparent of our illusions. At times, recently, it has seemed of an extreme tenuity, like the walls of a bubble; and no one can be certain that its prismatic splendour of the moment is not ominous of collapse. The comparison is perhaps extravagant, — unlikely to be justified.

Yet a weakening of insular prepossessions under the normal conditions of peace has not only been observed and repeatedly commented on but has long been deducible as a certain consequence of the rapidly growing freedom of intercourse between people of different race.

On the other hand, though national pride is by no means the sole cause of war, the indisputable fact remains that an appalling proportion of the most valuable men in Europe are at present entirely given over to the business of destroying one another who, but for this same pride, could never be herded together for any such purpose. In general, — as we have seen, — patriotism, though never the sole cause of any war, is the one factor which invariably appears in the causation of wars and, by the mere fact of its continued occupancy of a prominent place in men's thought, makes further wars inevitable. There it lies, ready-to-hand for the quarrelsome purposes of any clique, however small, that is suitably placed for turning it to account. In this sense, patriotism means war.

THE ESSENCE OF WAR

It seems difficult to exaggerate the force of this indictment. If war be defended as a

strengtheners and rejuvenators of the race, it must be shown for what uses it has ever proved or is ever likely to prove such a strengthener and rejuvenator. Not for the uses of peace, would doubtless be the verdict of history as read by impartial eyes. If for the uses of war, not merely, then, is war desirable but peace is undesirable and lo! we are fairly launched on the devolutionary tide. No doubt, the earth is sadly overpopulated; and, at the present stage of the science of eugenics, it would seem wise to make it easier for people to die rather than more difficult for them to get born. But war itself is such a cruel and unscientific method of decimation as to require, for its defence, arguments far stronger than any that have, as yet, been brought forward. For that matter, there is some reason to believe that the advocates of war as a racial tonic are already fearing an overdose of this most drastic medicine.

At the same time, and apart from these dubious doctrinaires, there exists a tendency, almost fashionable, to represent war as an inevitable, and not altogether undesirable, feature of our civilisation. There is nothing surprising in this phase of opinion, in so far as it may be derived from a more or less restricted consideration of

life in Europe today. For, indeed, those who are already, and excusably, weary of the formulas with which war is being decried may find much to attract them to the opposite point of view. For one thing, they may be struck with the fact that a great majority of the combatants are now so inured to the business of strenuous fighting as to take it pretty much as a matter of course. For another, they see a little army of erstwhile idlers now aroused to a sense of responsibility; luxurious women, too, performing menial services and earning gratitude. To add to these phenomena manifold deeds of valour and material sacrifice is to demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt that there is a bright side to war. And similarly, there is a bright side to every age of darkness; again and again, when humanity was exceedingly oppressed, remarkable talents have been brought to light which, otherwise, would certainly have remained hidden. Hence arises the question, Does the inmost, inscrutable soul of this present age of science and democracy believe that no effort should be made to avert great tribulations, since herein lies, at least, a momentary salvation? One answer — of a didactic nature — would be that, if tribulations are required, peace

may provide thereof as generously as war, if not so strikingly. As to the possibility of the tribulations of war mitigating the tribulations of peace, — let us consider the question.

Those who declare war to be one of the normal states of man always proceed to consider the sum of its activities as a preparative for peace. Those who speak of the normal occupations of peace never represent the sum of these occupations as a preparative for war. Doubtless war is indeed a normal state of certain men, even as the inverted position, head downward from a trapeze, is a normal state of certain others, or narcotic intoxication of still others. But the normality of either of these last two states must be more real than that of war because of its selective quality; one may generally take it or leave it, according to one's natural bent, whilst, in the case of war, there is often no choice.

That war, however, is generally an abnormal state of man has been practically demonstrated in many phases of the present European conflict: for example, in the reluctance of convalescent soldiers to return to the front; also in the hysteria, nervous breakdown, and insanity that so frequently resulted from the earliest clashes in 1914. The survivors of this ordeal

became hardened eventually to a life which contained few interests outside of the enemy and the means of destroying him — and the daily provision of food. In most places the routine and the physical conditions of existence were healthful and the men suffered no more in this respect than any non-combatant who has become accustomed to some other kind of nervous strain that is both abnormal and ephemeral. But there is no evidence from which one may conclude that the initial crisis of nerves — the battle-sickness in all ranks and all races — was the real anachronism of the day rather than war itself; far less, that it proceeded from a growing torpor or effeminacy that might be extirpated only by pitting the races against one another in a fight to the finish.

And finally, when peace comes, what is to be expected of the disbanded armies and of those who have ministered to them? Have we observed, in the past, that successful generals were less likely to be spoiled by adulation than the famous men of peace, or that old soldiers generally were an especially sober-minded type of citizen, or that the sybarite who had sacrificed his ease for the chance of adventure or out of devotion to his country's cause derived from the

novel experience a greater aptitude for serious pursuits?

Whatever history may say, — and have we really heard the demur of history? — there is no logical ground for denying that war must, on the whole, impair the efficiency of a people for the uses of peace. And herein lies a pitiful irony. The average patriot is a useful man in time of peace; the average skulker is not. In war, the average patriot has a good chance of getting killed or severely maimed whilst the average skulker has not only an excellent chance of coming off with a whole skin but a better chance than ever of becoming a person of influence in his community. And what of the surviving patriot? Is he likely to prove a better husband, a better father, a better worker in the routine of peace for the memory of those intensest hours of his existence when he must view with unconcern the spectacle of ruined homes and mangled comrades in order to press forward to effectual retribution? For my own part, let me confess that a month in the trenches would doubtless suffice to fill me with that queer jumble of fear, hatred, weariness, scientific *expertise*, Quixotism and careless devotion of which one has lately heard so much, and to

make me regard as utter balderdash any such discussion of patriotism as I have undertaken in these pages. I might loathe the war; I might long ardently for peace, yet, once it were attained, I should be fortunate indeed if I could resist the obsession of my warlike days and admit that they were lived abnormally, undesirably so, and in the very shadow of devolution.

One thing more, as to the trench-fighting, — a circumstance not altogether relished even by those who are generally most responsive to the theatrical aspect of war: the ferocity, to wit, of man.

That a primitive ferocity lingers inherent in man and may be brought to the surface by application of the appropriate stimulus, is being daily demonstrated on the battle-fields of Europe, where the ghastliest hurts are painless if the lust of slaughter has, for the moment, been thoroughly aroused; also, it is deemed prudent, wherever possible, to allow the wounded participant in yesterday's bayonet-encounter to complete his convalescence within the sound of firing, since his *morale* may be impaired by removal to more peaceful surroundings. At the same time, it is incredible — if we are to put any faith in history — that the thirst of blood

has had anything to do with the inception of any war of modern times. Those persons, especially, who determined the precise moment when the present war should begin, could have had no selfish desire to gratify this elemental passion because it was highly unlikely that any but a very few of them would ever have the opportunity to do this. Here, at least, was no fling-back to the impulses of our clawing and biting ancestors. And as to the mass of the populations then precipitated into a struggle in which their inborn ferocity — that hitherto unnoticed companion of patriotic aspirations — might be brought into active operation, one may speak still more decisively. Leaving out of account the unsuspected and extreme brutality of encounters with bayonet, pistol and hand-grenade, one may confidently assert that the reservists of 1914, generally, were neither eager for a fight of any kind nor in the least likely to become so if the existing state of peace had been indefinitely prolonged. Whoever now believes the contrary was either not in Europe during the early mobilisations or was probably misinformed as to the general temper of the peoples thus engaged.

The truth is that not ferocity alone but a host

of other curious propensities, as well, lie hidden in the inmost soul of man; and many of these, henceforward, may seldom, or even never, see the light of day. No doubt, for example, the bulk of the race could be converted into drug-fiends, sun-worshippers, or self-scourging fanatics if there existed, for the purpose, a machinery comparable to the engines of diplomacy and patriotic eloquence for producing war; but to argue that those forms of courage bearing a close relationship to the lust of slaughter are still entitled to a survival value in the evolution of the race is to forget that the race would probably be in a most perilous position today but for its continued production of individuals in whom the fighting spirit is as far as possible removed from the variety prevailing in the trenches. Amongst those whose ancestors, for many generations, have never been in the thick of battle and who, themselves, reveal the most striking disqualifications for warlike pursuits, are heads of states, pioneers in learning, artists possessing a creative faculty, — without whom, by the way, we could not exist at all, — and reformers of religion.

When the impossibility of further wars is finally demonstrated, the inherent pugnacity in

man will be manifested in very different kinds of combat from that kind which is now engaging everybody's attention,—and doubtless without detriment to the race. Quarrels exceeding the scope of two pairs of fists may be settled in a gladiatorial arena from which the public and all reporters are excluded. There being no onlookers but the police and a dispassionate umpire, we may discover the sheer, unstimulated pugnacity in all tolerably normal combatants to be remarkably little (less, probably, than appears in the average ring-fighter of today) and so be forced to refer the greater part of that which has hitherto passed under this name to the general need of self-assertion—that desire to excel which, at one time, leads to the subtlest of rivalries; again, brings quick tempers afoul of one another; and again, as at present, is utilised by blindfold ambitions to reduce whole continents to a state of preposterous havoc.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Now, apart from the marching and fighting of armies, what kind of spectacle has been presented to the non-partisan onlooker during the past twenty months?

About the middle of July, 1914, only one nation of the earth, probably, was making any special preparations for war. Yet all nations were suffering from internal disorders each of which, in accordance with the tribal system of humanity, was different from that which prevailed across the nearest border. In the United States of America, for example, a considerable proportion of the population were either looking for a job or wondering how they should pay their office-rent or seeking to prevent their incomes from dwindling to impossible dimensions, — all of which endeavours were, in the main, quite barren of result. England, meanwhile, was rushing to the verge of civil war; France, groaning under the burden of political corruption. Germany presented a fairer outward aspect, but it was known that many children were not happy there. Such was the rather dubious felicity bequeathed to these four peoples, with or without their consent, by their heroic ancestors, — wherein is nothing strange, since the said ancestors themselves were seldom without a superfluous thorn in the side. An unusually prodigious number of people were saying, *Human nature is like this* — How can you help it? — You can't expect us to be perfect.

Yet, when all was ready — erratic statesmanship and clumsy diplomacy attuned to just the proper pitch — and declarations of war resounded hither and thither like automatic thunder, the response from all populations, neutral and belligerent alike, was a high-strung wail of astonishment and horror: the affair was too big, altogether incredible. In other words, what Europe had long been waiting for — what Europe had the most convincing reasons to expect — proved, on its realisation under conditions of modern science and organisation, too tough a morsel for the modern digestion. There ensued, accordingly, a spirited contest of platitudes concerning the question of responsibility, in which generals and journalists, seasoned ministers and budding jurists all had a share. Each side accused the other of having failed, or been about to fail, to observe the rules of the game until, presently, it was discovered that there had never been any rules for the game that might not be ignored by either player upon the development of new conditions of play. The mythical character of international law having thus received a practical demonstration, it was decided to resort to blazonry. Two splendid banners were unfurled, one bearing the device,

Humanity, the other, Culture, and the one was championed against the other. A feeble undercurrent of rhetoric, too, was always kept in motion for the benefit of that portion of the non-combatant populations which required the assurance of a real grievance. Meanwhile, the United States of America and other favourably situated neutrals, lulled by the mere lapse of time to a false sense of security, have entered upon the perfectly futile business of turning the conflict to practical account. Fondly unsuspecting that the proceeds of this operation will inevitably return to the coffers of those peoples who will stand in more urgent need of them, they have built up a factitious and one-sided prosperity which they are powerless to protect, since it availeth little to save the pieces of a crashing law. They may not even protect the lives or property of their citizens on the seas; they are naturally averse to adding more precious fuel to the flame of war; so here they stick, facing the future with a bovine stare and chewing the hope that they may one day appear resplendent in the rôle of mediator and earn the gratitude of all mankind.

Where the real responsibility lies should be clear to anyone who may forget most of that

which has been dinned into his ears and give the bare facts a little serious thought. Let me confess that, with respect to the mythical principles of international law and to the equally unsatisfactory principles of fair play and humane dealing in Hell, I, too, have an opinion as to who are the greatest sinners in the present conflict. But nothing would induce me to express this opinion in the course of a serious discussion, both the opinion and its basis in fact being of absurdly small importance in relation to the real peril that lowers over the earth. Nor is there any need to say how ungrateful is the task of trying to prove everybody intensely wrong; for, of all moments suitable for this purpose, the present is so singularly and brilliantly auspicious that it should certainly not be allowed to pass. For, until 1914, only a few persons knew that nations were essentially immoral, whilst henceforward no one may expect that any kind of morality such as we associate with individuals will ever be found in nations constructed as are the present nations of the earth, except in affairs of small importance. Thus, the theory that Europe has been set upon by a small party of powerful bandits and that, if these bandits are finally suppressed and made

an example of before all mankind, the old régime of nations may resume its peaceful sway, each contributing to the excellences of the others, is no longer to be supported by any who can do just a little better than repeat what has reached their ears from an authoritative source. To attempt the imposition of impossible restrictions on one weaker nation and then to invade another whose neutrality you have guaranteed is by no means the only way of becoming responsible for the war that follows. Snubbing a monarch is another way; still another is taking possession, by more or less legitimate means mythically, of a greater portion of the undefended territory of the earth than is indispensable for your immediate needs. Mere growth is sufficient. The nation that expands, even in the most peaceable known manner, invites attack and has no cause for resentment in adversity. In the case of the present war, the responsibility of the United States of America and of certain other neutral nations, when pragmatically considered, is double, for they have not suffered, in any considerable degree, from the collapse of the system at which they have connived. The American tradition of avoidance of foreign alliances only adds to the measure of

American responsibility. Moreover, transparent as this policy has always been, — yet a subject of rhetorical eloquence, even this! — it is now threatened with summary abandonment since, upon any conceivable settlement of the European conflict in accordance with the usage of nations, America will be fairly reaching out for alliances. Let us consider the implications of this kind of settlement.

GERMANY VICTORIOUS

If Germany should win the war and seem in a fair way to conquer the earth, we who are not Germans should dispute with her every inch of the ground. Leaving out of account the highly probable defection of her present allies as soon as they should learn the price of victory, we others might be subjugated again and again; just as often should we rebel. For we could not, on any terms, consent to the German culture being imposed on us by force. Much as we may admire it in certain respects, in other respects we should always find ourselves disapproving and thoroughly satisfied with the reasons of our disapproval. Often as we may wish we were more like the Germans, it would be impossible for us to become entirely like them at their own

bidding. The points of essential disagreement vary, of course, with the particular non-German people that may be under consideration, but the important ones are so well known as to require no mention here. It is enough to say that any superposition of German culture upon Gallic or Anglo-Saxon culture, or any process of equalisation amongst the three, would have to be inaugurated at the instance of the non-Germans as well as of the Germans. One final consequence of your efforts at conquest, O Germany, would be disaster to yourself. But what of the process through which this result should be attained? An age of inky darkness, no less, lit with lurid, infernal flashes, — altogether a most devolutionary spectacle.

ENGLAND VICTORIOUS

Given a victorious England, posing as the saviour of Europe, — a claim which many estimable Britons, missing the faces of their friends and conscious of a lean pocket, would be honestly incapable of calling in question, — the ulterior sequence of events would be similar. Her late enemies must pay the costs — have they anyone but themselves to thank for their sad plight? — and, yet more, they must be bound,

hand and foot, that the normal vocations of mankind be no longer exposed to piratical aggression. The late enemies sign the peace on these terms, there being nothing else for them to do, but without the slightest intention of fulfilling either condition. Because — not that the signature matters in the least — neither condition is capable of being fulfilled. As to the first, the most resourceful of vanquished peoples would be unable, within any reasonable period of time, to produce a tithe of the cost of the present war. As to the second, a nation cannot be bound, hand and foot; no civilised people of ancient or modern times has ever been rendered impotent for mischief.

What, then, shall England do for her friends? To say nothing of the Balkan Peninsula, — where she will suddenly discover she has had a host of supporters, now asking a reward for their services, — the entente is quadruple and England may not stand alone. She is already owed vast sums and knows that debtors are not without their sensitive, fractious moods. In fine, everybody is scorched, and the balm that was in the cupboard has all been used for yesterday's hurts. But here is where the neutrals should come in. America, for instance, has a

canal, a Monroe Doctrine, some distant islands and a commerce overseas which is just on the point of blossoming into the prettiest of her products. She is, moreover, years behind the times and a perfect blockhead when confronted with the doctrine of changed conditions; if she persist in blundering along in the footsteps of her fathers, she must be punished for getting in the way of less laggard folk and cramping their style. Behold her, then, — chaste seclusion unspeakably profaned, — waving a frantic hand across either sea for assistance in her predicament.

Piecemeal plundering, or even cumulative menace, is not tolerated; war is the only answer. And the interests involved in the settlement of the present conflict being nothing short of universal, any settlement thereof which includes the imposition upon the vanquished of either a punitive fetter or a special material burden means inevitably a succession of new alignments, not merely of reciprocally defiant powers, but of reciprocally aggressive powers — chaos, to wit, answering to chaos until either degeneracy develops an irresistible momentum or the control of affairs devolves upon some such persons, hitherto practically negligible, as

one we have already been introduced to in this familiar conceit, —

“ Durch Mitleid wissend,
Der reine Thor;
Harre Sein
Den Ich erkor.”

The situation is as full of irony as it is of peril; consider, by the same token, the people composing the nations of the quadruple entente. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, are capable, and have given evidence, of a real admiration for one another; many of them have been educated, have married, formed friendships, within one another's borders; yet the notion of Russia, Italy, France and England, weary and spent though they be on the day of final victory, combining to maintain peace upon Earth, showing a tolerably impartial consideration for one another's needs, and unitedly ensuring a square deal for outsiders is, upon any accepted theory of international arrangements, too preposterous to deserve a moment's serious thought.

A DRAWN BATTLE

But it may be that neither side will win a decisive victory. After a vast amount of bar-

gaining and contention, the exhausted combatants may agree on something approaching the *status quo ante* as the most feasible liquidation of their quarrel. This arrangement, as exponents of both sides have so often admitted, would amount practically to a truce; and the work of preparation for future defence would be carried on with all possible vigour from the very day of the signing of peace. Certain of the neutral nations would be compelled to double the efforts of the late belligerents because of the rearward position in which they would have entered the race. That which has already befallen Belgium, Greece, neutral ships, unarmed merchantmen, unfortified towns, would have sufficiently demonstrated the futility of further treaties and international conventions; or, if proposals to these ends should actually be made, they must be for quite another purpose than the protection, by common agreement, of the supposed rights of any nation small or great, neutral or belligerent. Certain nations, to be sure, might always refuse to be as unscrupulous as certain of their neighbours. In a democracy, for instance, qualmish citizens must be listened to. But all nations engaged in the present war have shown a readiness, when the

situation was sufficiently critical, — that is, when the observance of ante-bellum agreements was especially obligatory and fraught with the weightiest significance, — to ignore both the letter and the spirit of these agreements.

Disarmament, absolute or partial, would doubtless be recognised as a device far too easily circumvented from its very inception onward. An international police to enforce disarmament would be equally out of the question, since all captains possessing the requisite prestige and ability for commanding it would be suspected of partiality. In sum, an armed truce would seem, in the present case, the only possible outcome of a drawn battle. This might soon be broken or it might endure for an indefinite period; little knowledge and less imagination should be sufficiently convincing that the race is neither sound enough to emerge in decent condition from another war of almost universal dimensions nor industrious enough to maintain an effective martial safeguard against it.

THE SOLUTION

Is it conceivable that the war will be settled in accordance with some standard different

from the usage of nations? In other words, is a real solution possible, — one carrying a promise for the future?

One such solution is indeed possible, — and only one. It is very obvious; it has never before been attempted; it involves a voluntary and pretty general act of renunciation.

A tall order, this? Not likely, at any rate, to be filled, in proportionate part, by those of our acquaintance who are ever ready to prate of human foresight as limited by the tip of the human nose, and of human nature generally as a thing mostly weak and only a little bit strong, — thereby certifying that pessimism, from time to time and place to place, transcends all rational bounds. But these persons may prove as impotent to thwart a just and sensible project as they are incapable of applying their devolutionary doctrines to the practical affairs of life.

As for the rest of us, what is the incentive to combine for the purposes of such a novel enterprise?

On the one hand we see disaster, — an age of darkness imminent.

On the other hand — if the enterprise may but be given the needed impetus — lie an effec-

tive safeguard against any such contingency and an absolute guarantee that the war of 1914 may never be imitated.

Europe, being hopelessly at war, must come forgivingly to peace.

Is Europe perhaps of a formidable bigness for taking such an unwonted decision, — and further swollen with resentment?

All Europeans may be easily reached within a week if there is anything of importance to be said to them. And amongst an overwhelming majority of them the resentment is certainly but skin-deep or exists not at all. When the masters of war and industry decide to forgive, the men, for once, will be eager to follow. There is but one thing needed, — a great resolve. If the outlook is stormy, therefore is it stimulating; if, for a millennium, we have been shamefaced of the virtue that was in us, the fruit, then, should be ripe; if an ordeal is before us, to endure it is to acquire wisdom, — to have endured it with a tolerable fortitude will be to have bequeathed a measure of happiness and decent living. But if a great problem is before us, it is, at the same time, a problem of the simplest. There is one solution of it, and that one should be understood immediately by every man or

woman of the earth who has ever condoned a trespass.

Here is the entire, brief program. The victor must perform a voluntary act of abnegation — a refusal to accept the spoils of war or humble the beaten foe — so clear and unequivocal as to silence all skeptics living and yet unborn. This means not merely the avoidance of such a tactical blunder as was the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine. It means an overt avowal of complicity in the late malfeasance, hence the erection of a solid precedent of justice that may be viewed and comprehended from every level of society.

The same necessity applies to the case of a drawn battle: there must be no bargaining.

The same necessity applies again to the neutral nations; and, in the case of those which have not suffered, the sacrifice must be doubled. Of money, the rich must give, if necessary, even unto one half of all they possessed; the poor might give pennies which would probably be returned to them. Not cash, alone, but active help, as well, must be forthcoming until more should be refused, a state as nearly as possible approaching equilibrium having been established.

It is obvious that, in every case, the consent of the people must be obtained; every donation, even, might be voluntary; for a people may not be taxed in the traditional manner and on a large scale for novel purposes.

Once the act of renunciation were performed, — and only then, — disarmament would follow, for it would thenceforth be impossible to enlist a population in the prosecution of any quarrel not with savages. Of the ulterior benefit here indicated, no more need be said in this connection. Let us, however, notice some of the upsetting consequences of the supposed altruism of nations.

EMBARRASMENTS

The disbandment of armies would leave their officers, many of them otherwise untrained, without a vocation; manufacturers of munitions of war would find their stocks and factories practically valueless. Universal free trade would be inevitable to the benefit of certain industries and to the acute, temporary disadvantage of others. Mills of many different kinds in certain regions would be forced to close, causing great numbers of workmen, skilled and unskilled, to become, for a space, a burden on

their communities. This contingency would probably develop a spirit of free trade in human material, as well, leading to a more or less thorough redistribution of the industrial population throughout the earth and causing initial losses in connection with equipment and organisation. Many retired persons of both sexes would be startled at the sudden disappearance of their incomes; others would see theirs surprisingly augmented. In sum, the world of business and finance would be pretty rudely thrown out of kelter and would have to search diligently for several new starting-points; meanwhile charity would, for a while, become more of a career than it is even today, and the receiver of alms would cast his old garments of bitterness and pride and appear in fashionable raiment.

In this picture of distress and embarrassment during the readjustment of affairs, or in any more lurid variant thereof that may suggest itself, is there anything really resembling chaos, — confusion poignant and without remedy? Are we not here contemplating, on a somewhat enlarged scale, a scene that is already familiar to the greater portion of mankind and has never included a tithe of the misery actually

saddled upon the earth this day? Is any cynical financier or manufacturer likewise so avaricious and shortsighted as — rather than consecrate a portion of his wealth to an altruistic and practically remunerative enterprise — to conspire against himself to the extent of inviting strangers to relieve him of his all? And finally, is anyone blind to the significance of nations actually practising, not magnanimity — let us, at any cost, steer clear of rhetoric — but justice, and to the powerful incentive thereby supplied to individuals and associations of individuals to lend strenuous arms and right the rolling ship? “ But where do I come in? ” is a cry that might be heard pretty frequently for the space of a few weeks, at the most.

All thoughtful people are doubtless aware that the least hitch in the working of a novel program is regarded by many as a final demonstration of the unsoundness of the program and is generally greeted with as many shouts of protest and execration as are brought forth by positive calamities resulting from an adherence to traditional usage. It is only when the calamity is excessively dire and when even direr are being actively plotted for the future, that reasonable tolerance may be expected for the im-

perfections of any scheme involving a considerable dislocation of the grooves of human activity. This is the case of today.

Once the process of re-adjustment were complete and our one notable gain incorporated in common speech and memory, we should, in other respects, get on at least as well as before and probably a great deal better. Certain problems, however, might remain as tough as ever. Let one of these be mentioned forthwith, partly by way of confession to an earlier inaccuracy in these pages which might not easily be explained at the moment. To say that a solid precedent of justice may be reared which will be viewed and comprehended from every level of society is to say what is not true. For there exist amongst us certain pitiable monsters who are constitutionally incapable of accounting for any just or generous act and have therefore no choice but to deny that any such act is possible. Others, through early training or later associations, become so like unto these that any practical distinction between the two may hardly be established. Not criminals, especially, in the eye of the law, are here indicated; probably the vast majority of thieves and murderers are by no means of this degree of moral depravity

which, for that matter, is met with in every situation of life, — now clad in expensive furs and ministered to by a retinue of servants, and again miserably congested in the slums of a great city. The simplicity of nations could have but little meaning for these unfortunates; and, until somebody should discover a better method, we must cope with them in some such manner as in the past. Fortunately, they are not a numerous class and have seldom acquired a considerable influence in our affairs.

But to the solution of the majority of social and economical problems we should be able to devote more time, a better class of brains and a freer spirit of inquiry than while labouring constrainedly under the prejudice of an inflated national life.

THE FIRST STEP

After all, in this business, as in so many others, the first step is the crucial one; it demands nerve, resolution and a cool head. Those who advocate it should be possessed of authority and prestige; which means, they will be subject to all the embarrassments of an established record. First to confront them will be the financier and the capitalist, seeing the whole

big world in their smaller concerns and bred to a blind faith in the effective guardianship of the law. These will be supported by the statistician bringing a bagful of premises for the false inferences of a materialistic age. Derisive cynics from all walks of life will be much in evidence with a jingle of hackneyed aphorisms; earnest citizens will naïvely beseech us to perform the superhuman feat of seeing things as they really are. And the most measured of all protestant voices will be that of the conservative statesman. This conscientious person has always been seated in uneasy majesty on the bank of the river of life. Exposed incessantly to the dust-whirls of diplomacy and the chilling blasts of parliamentary eloquence, he has never dared try if the water be warm and clean; hence, in the present instance, he is certain to pronounce in well-considered, frosty periods to the effect that not only is any solidarity of nations deriving so remotely from self-interest impossible of realisation but any efforts to this end would open up vistas of endless mischief, etc., etc. To face him with the alternative were to precipitate a discussion of the lessons of history. On his chosen ground, which he sorrowfully declines to abandon, he is perfectly unan-

swerable, and the only sensible thing to do is to leave him alone. He will be negligible anyhow, if true insight shall have begotten a will to win.

If such prove indeed to be the case, there need be no further waiting. It should be easy to bring the sleekest of stay-at-homes to a realisation, not merely verbal, of the significance of thirty million of the best men of the race having each a hand at one or other of the thirty million throats. As for these armies themselves, no doubt can exist but they would abandon the struggle at a moment's notice, even if given no better than the traditional assurances as to the future. Yet, within their ranks, weekly, tens of thousands succumb. And how many cowards are there? Precious few, we are told, at any battle-front. Valour seems indeed a terrible thing, highly infectious in one cause or another. But has anyone the pluck to stand forth and stay its overbrimming rage? A few determined men, capable of a great resolve, are the one and imperative need of the time, and for all time.

IMPERFECTLY RENOVATED

Not many, be it hoped, among those dismal experts in the dissection of human nature are

nursing the delusion that, if we were successful in making war impossible, we should be almost too good to be real. On the contrary, to escape from martial preoccupations through conscious efforts of our own would be to bring into stronger relief certain far tougher problems of our social and industrial life; any cherubic countenance appearing incontinent in our midst would rapidly be creased with care. It is not within the scope of this essay to discuss the social or industrial conditions prevailing in separate communities nor even to mention the problems connected therewith, except in so far as an analogy may be perceived between them and the problem of international usage. When a nation exacts indemnity, levies tribute, imposes restrictions, or attempts subjugation beyond its own borders, it does indeed suggest a parallel between its own procedure and that of the communities which go to make it up. It thereby exhibits the same restless propensity to jump at such conclusions as are readily expressible in language — hence, the same profound ineptitude for safeguarding its own best interests — that is manifested within its borders in the results of all manner of collective enterprise, such as laws, political and charita-

ble ideals, and public opinion variously crystallised. Here are two syllogisms typical of the kind that were snapped up by our impulsive forebears to the exceeding detriment of their posterity's digestion.

Punish the thief, and others will think twice before stealing.

Protect not only the drunkard's family and their neighbours but even the drunkard from himself, thereby scoring a victory for reform that shall prove an inspiration for all sinners.

In the one case, the inflammable imaginations of the young, of the feeble-minded and of cramped adventurers are left out of account; in the other, the possible influence upon the race of sustaining the drunkard through generation upon generation suffers a similar fate.

But for the fact that present satisfaction, all else being equal, is generally suspected of containing a snare, we of the Western world should probably recognise the things that may really make for happiness in a community as being — next to the life of the family, which, under all circumstances, occupies the first place — the right to work, play, speak and earn an honest wage without prejudice or vexatious restrictions; the social glass; a penny in the old

man's hat; the dollar lent ungrudgingly; a helping hand to the wife in a throng; a kind word to the erring daughter; tolerance unreserved for the bastard; civil and dispassionate consideration for the thief. Even as we know in our hearts that we have, none of us, the shadow of a right to sit in judgment on the adulteress or the thief, so have our pitiful little prophylactic devices of ostracism and imprisonment been frustrated throughout the ages. Has it ever indeed been proved that they sometimes really deter? Unhappily, there were no statisticians at the time when organised intimidation was first thought of. Some forgotten genius of antiquity said, "Of course they will deter; why, man, it's obvious!" — and everybody was thenceforth too busy with general felicitations over the extreme ingenuity of the contrivance to observe if there were any sensible change in the sum of evil-doing.

In our own day, the deterrent force of threatened punishment is doubtless felt strongly by those whose only crimes are not mentioned in the penal statutes; but the tremendous incentive to recognised crime provided by this same device — especially the fatal attraction of the death-penalty and of a possible escape there-

from — has probably never received full justice at the hands of psychologists and practical criminologists. As a makeshift — a choice between two supposed evils — it is undoubtedly a failure; but, as a cardinal principle of civilisation, to be upheld brazenly, even rhetorically, it is the kind of monstrosity which, so long as it may endure, will prevent honest and thoughtful men from contributing anything to social reform. Here is no need to depict the jubilation of downtrodden malefactors, if the police should become suddenly a mere restraining influence, — nor the momentary increase of crimes and misdemeanours by hundreds per cent, followed by a swifter decline of the same to unheard-of low levels when it should transpire that the prey were as children and the law no longer an enemy, — because the right to punish will not be renounced by a single stroke of the pen.

But it cannot endure forever. The time will come, barring devolution, when from every pulpit will be preached the doctrine, Do unto your neighbour — not merely as you would have him do unto yourself, but — as you would soberly *like* to do unto him. When that time comes, practically no incentive to what we now call crime will remain; murder and rape will

be but the dreams of madmen lacking an opportunity; it will be possible to ridicule the thief and the adulteress instead of making them the cynosure of morbid eyes; the drunkard will have the choice between, on the one hand, eliminating himself from the race by the obvious, painless and scientific method of alcoholism persevered in and, on the other, re-instating himself in efficiency by the exhilarating effort of his *own* will and intelligence; any lineage for whom other forms of present satisfaction contain indeed a dangerous snare will, similarly, either lose influence in our affairs up to the point where they may no longer perpetuate their kind, or else will clear the snare forever from their path; the greater part of human drudgery will be over by midday; etc., etc. — and we shall then be all the better prepared to attack the really difficult problems of existence.

Meanwhile the nations are, in the above respects, still behaving toward one another very much as their citizens are encouraged reciprocally to do; but the consequences of united misbehaviour are at present so staggeringly obvious as to draw speech even from those who are habitually silent. How, indeed, is it possible to hold one's tongue? We've a good country for

our habitation which is by way of being converted into a wilderness. Water is plentiful, no less than the river of life, itself. Its murmur is grateful to the ear; the play of its waves is an inexhaustible delight to the eye; it abounds in pleasant little creatures enjoying a heyday. But we may not use it on our lands because the authorities have declared it impure and posted watchmen along the banks. Here and there, a renegade plunges boldly in, drinks and is refreshed; but his annoyance, on being fished bodily out, stamps the experience as an unwholesome one. Now and then, the problem of sanitation is officially considered, but nobody has ever been able to discover the contaminating source. Meanwhile, what of the precious stream, itself; if the appointed guardians of the valley, grown fearful of darkness and shadows, decide to level the primeval forest, how shall it be replenished? From the ocean of the universe, perhaps; but only the coast-line is known. Or from the wells of human curiosity.



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